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THE DUTCH NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY AND ITS PARA-MILITARY FORMATIONS

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SUMMARY

1. There is only one Dutch Nazi party in the Netherlands--the National Socialist Movement of the Netherlands (National Socialistische Beweging der Nederlanden), popularly referred to as the NSB. Totalitarianism, anti-Semitism, and close cooperation with Nazi Germany are the principal planks of the NSB platform. The influence of NSB before the German invasion was small. In the last national election (1937) the party polled only 4 percent of the total votes for members of the Dutch Second Chamber (House of Representatives).

2. In December 1942 the Germans declared the NSB to be "the only bearer of political activity in the Netherlands," and gave to Anton Mussert, leader of the party, the title of "Leader of the Dutch People." Under German occupation the party was given a role to play which, though nominally important, was limited in practice to advisory functions. Many members of the movement were appointed to important posts in government, industry, and trade. Affiliated organizations, including all classes of people, were founded in every field. Nevertheless, popular support did not increase after the German occupation and Dutch supporters of the NSB have never included more than 4 percent of the population.

3. The para-military branch of the party, the "Defense Section" (Weerafdeeling--WA), has been armed and enlarged. Several other para-military units have been organized, all of

them directly or indirectly under the jurisdiction of the National Socialist Party, and devoted to Nazi principles.

4. When Holland is liberated, some Dutch Nazis will join the German army or go underground to combat the Allies. The bulk of the rank-and-file will probably make an about-face and try to appear more patriotic than the most loyal Dutchmen. The Dutch Nazis are so thoroughly hated that if the population is left free to follow its inclinations, it may dispose of them in a wave of bloodshed; on the other hand, if the Allies round up the Dutch Nazis in order to subject them to due process of law, the frustrated populace may harbor feelings of resentment and ill-will against the Allies.

THE DUTCH NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY AND ITS PARA-MILITARY FORMATIONS

I. HISTORY OF THE DUTCH NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY

A. Pre-Invasion Period

The Dutch National Socialist Movement (NSB) was founded in 1931-32 by Anton Mussert. Like its German counterpart it advocated totalitarianism, dictatorship, corporative state, and anti-Semitism. The NSB was made up in a large measure of dissatisfied, politically-ambitious persons and it did not play a large part in Dutch politics. At its greatest strength (1936) the party received 6 percent of the votes in the provincial and municipal elections. However, as German aggressive measures increased, the NSB lost support, and in the last national elections (1937) the NSB obtained only 4 percent of the total number of seats in the Second Chamber (House of Representatives). Just before the invasion its strength had declined even further.

B. Post-Invasion Period

The NSB actively helped the Germans to conquer the Netherlands and thereby earned the hatred of all loyal Dutch. Despite the services it had rendered to the Germans, it was not richly rewarded by the latter in the early stages of the occupation. The Germans hoped to win the population over to cooperation with Nazism, and they realized that this could not be accomplished through the NSB. The Germans soon found out that it was

impossible to achieve their goal of conciliating the Dutch, a fact which was made plain to them by the organization of Dutch resistance activities. They thereupon began to give members of the NSB somewhat more consideration, in particular by entrusting administrative posts to NSB adherents. Several Secretaries-General and Provincial Commissioners as well as many minor officials were replaced by NSB men. Adherence to the NSB became a requirement which candidates for official positions had to meet.

In December 1942 the Germans gave additional prestige to the NSB by bestowing upon it the grandiose title "Bearer of the Political Will of the Dutch People" (Drager van de politieke Wil van het Nederlandsche Volk), and by appointing its chief, Mussert, "Leader of the Dutch People." Mussert thereupon set up (February 1943) a shadow governmental cabinet. These changes looked impressive on paper, but the powers of the NSB were not greatly increased in fact. The influence of the party was limited to the right of advising the German civil authorities on personnel and administrative matters. The NSB received no special executive powers, and it was not even given authority to advise directly Dutch government officials.

The NSB has been torn by internal rivalries, due to the fact that after the invasion it incorporated within itself all the smaller pro-German parties in the Netherlands. While the leaders of these groups have been given important

posts in the NSB, they have not been satisfied, and have intrigued against Mussert. This development has not been discouraged by the Germans. Chief rival to Mussert is M.M.Rost van Tonningen, Secretary-General of Finance, President of the Netherlands Bank, and President of the Netherlands East Company. Rost van Tonningen is handicapped in that he is one-fourth Indonesian in blood. Among the other would-be successors to Mussert are J. J. Feldmeyer, leader of the Germanic SS, who favors annexation of the Netherlands, and van Rappard, who before the invasion had led the National Socialist Netherlands Workers' Party, a group which merged with the NSB in October 1941.

Recently the NSB has declined in prestige and morale for another reason, the continued victories of the Allies. It has suffered from numerous defections as those opportunists who had climbed on the band-wagon in the hey-day of Nazi successes hurriedly clamber down now that German defeat appears to be imminent. Even some quite prominent NSB members have repudiated the party, while others, realizing that the German do not deal gently with turncoats, have remained in the party, hoping to placate loyal Dutchmen by feeding the underground useful information. The NSB found it necessary to combat defeatism within the party by setting up an internal security section called "Special Service" (Speciale Dienst) to check up on the actions and political opinions of NSB members. When this section proved unable to cope with the situation,

a new and elaborate inner control system, called "General Supervision of Members" (Algemeen Toezicht Leden) was created to root out weakening Dutch Nazis and anti-Nazis who have joined in order to burrow from within.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE DUTCH NATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The Dutch National Socialist Movement NSB consists of the party proper together with a number of affiliated civil and para-military organizations through which the movement exercises its influence in every sphere of national life.

A. Organization of the Dutch National Socialist Party

1. Functional. The headquarters of the party is at Hilversum. C. van Geelkerken, is deputy leader of the NSB, and C. J. Huygens is its secretary.

There are seventeen functional sections of the NSB central organization, corresponding roughly to the Dutch governmental departments, e.g., Finance, General Affairs, Public Health, Education, Press and Propaganda, etc.

The Press and Propaganda Section is especially active. The official daily newspaper issued by the movement is Het Nationale Dagblad (The National Daily). The official weekly, Volk en Vaderland (People and Fatherland), is the original organ of the party, and still its most important one. While there are newspapers in Holland which are not under the direct control of the NSB movement, members of the NSB are to be found on the staffs of all the most important ones.

2. Territorial. Territorially the NSB is organized into sixteen districts, the latter being divided into seventy-six areas (kringen) and sub-areas, which in turn are subdivided into nine hundred groups. The sixteen districts consist of Holland's eleven provinces and the following five districts: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, "Germany District," and "Belgium District." The party head of each district is known as the "District Leader." Other important district officials are the "Treining Leader" and the "Propaganda Leader." It is to be noted that the nine hundred basic groups of the party more or less equal the number of municipalities in Holland.

B. The NSB Shadow Government

The shadow cabinet which Mussert formed in February 1943 resembles in organization the cabinet of the pre-invasion Dutch government, but it has no actual control over the present administration. The task of this cabinet is to advise the German authorities in all Dutch matters. It is composed as follows:

Delegates for Affairs of State

Internal Affairs and National Security: C. van Geelkerken, Deputy-leader of the NSB

Education: Dr. J. Jeswiet. (acting)

Social Economic Matters and the Dutch East Company: M.M. Rost van Tonningen, Secretary. General for Finance, President of the Netherlands Bank

Public Enlightenment: Dr. A.M.N. de Ranitz

Waterworks and Transportation: W. C. Z. van der Vegte, Director-General of Postal Services

Public Health: Dr. K. Keyer, leader of the Medical Front

Agriculture and Fisheries: Major P. F. Tammens, mayor of Groningen, Supervisor of the Landstand

Social Affairs: C. van Ravenzwaay, Mayor of Utrecht

Special Duties, Special Institutions: H. W. Muller Lehning

Delegates for People's Affairs

Radio:	Dr. W. A. Herweyer
Labor Service:	H. Meuldijk
People's Service:	F. W. van Vloten
Libraries:	F. H. H. Ouwerling
Museums:	Dr. D. Hannema

Head of Mussert's personal cabinet is D. de Block van Scheltinga. Dr. J. H. Carp directs the State Secretariat of the party.

In addition to the regular party organization and the shadow NSB government Mussert has appointed a number of advisers who are specialists in their fields and represent in the party the particular interests of their groups. Mussert also has a special deputy attached to the Office of the Provincial Commissioner in each of the eleven provinces.

Though this shadow government as such has not succeeded in obtaining power, the NSB has penetrated deeply into the Dutch government by reason of having many of its members in

important positions. Most of the posts in the higher government echelons are now filled by NSB members. Of the present Secretaries-General in the Dutch central government, there is only one pre-invasion appointee, and he has no political influence; the others are all Dutch Nazis or collaborationists. Only three of the original eleven Provincial Commissioners remain in their positions and they, like the other Provincial Commissioners, are controlled by associate commissioners who are German. The president of the Netherlands Bank is a member of the NSB, as are the burgomasters and the chief police officials of all the larger municipalities. However, there are still great numbers of loyal Dutch in lower civil-service positions.

C. Civilian Organizations Affiliated with the NSB

1. Economic Organizations. The ultimate aim of the Germans in the Netherlands is to reconstruct Dutch public life in accordance with National Socialist principles. One of the basic Nazi ideas is the corporative state. While many changes leading to the corporative state have been introduced in Holland, the system is far from completely installed. NSB members play a large role in the corporative organizations which have so far been organized. Typical corporative organizations are the Landstand and the Cultural Chamber, which

control respectively agriculture and cultural life. NSB members not only head these organizations but also fill all the higher posts therein.

Closely connected with the corporative system are the so-called "Fronts," which are associations of trade, industrial and professional personnel, established by the NSB. These Fronts parallel the associations created by the Nazis for the effective control of Dutch economy. The Peasants' Front, the Medical Front, the Economic Front, the Transportation Front, and the Shipping Front are among the fronts which have been set up. Membership in them is restricted to NSB members, and each is led by NSB members who are experts in the economic field covered by the particular front. While no official status has been given to these organizations, the government calls upon them in an advisory capacity.

2. Youth and Women's Organizations.

a. The National Youth Storm Formation (Nationale Jeugdstorm - NJS). The National Youth Storm is charged with the political education of Netherlands youth. It is now the only youth organization, all other pre-war youth groups having been dissolved. The NJS is heavily subsidized by the German authorities and the party. The property of the dissolved youth organizations has been transferred to the NJS or to the National Youth Hostel Association, which operates all youth hostels in the country.

b. The National Socialist Women's Organization Nationaal Socialistische Vrouwen Organizatie -- NSVO). The NSVO is the women's auxiliary of the NSB; its purpose being to organize activities specifically for women. It sponsors a program of social-service and education.

c. META. The META is an organization for girls between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six. It is a subordinate organization of the NSVO, and carries on a social-service program for girls.

III. PARA-MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE NSB

A. The Defense Section of the NSB (Weer Afdeling -- WA)

From its early days, the NSB had a defense section, composed of its most fanatic members. The strength of the WA in 1942 was reported as twenty-five thousand men by its commander, J. A. Zondervan. The WA probably has fewer members now, since many WA men who went to fight on the Russian Front lost their lives, while recruitment of new members has practically come to a standstill. The WA has also been dispersed to some extent among other para-military formations.

B. The German SS in the Netherlands (Der Germaansche SS in Nederland)

The Germanic SS in the Netherlands, which is led by J. H. Feldmeyer, is the most important para-military unit in Holland, and possesses a political influence which goes far beyond its military strength. Its members are the most ardent

pro-Germans in Holland and favor the annexation of Holland to Germany. They take an oath of allegiance to Hitler, not to the Dutch puppet, Mussert.

SS headquarters is at Utrecht. The SS is divided into five "standards" (standaards), each "standard" being subdivided into cohorts (scharen). One of the five "standards," the "Westland Standard" was destroyed in Russia, and only four are still in the Netherlands. The official periodical of the SS is called Storm (Storm).

Several other Dutch para-military units are completely or partially under SS control.

C. The Country Storm Guard (Landstorm)

The Country Storm Guard (originally called the Country Guard) was established in March 1943. It was put under the supervision of the German SS, and general control over the unit was placed in the hands of SS Polizei-führer Rauter. The commandant of the corps is SS Ober-führer Knapp.

It was first declared that the function of this unit was to defend the territory of the Netherlands, but Rauter later implied in several speeches that its members could be required to go anywhere to defend the interests of Hitler's Europe, even outside the borders of Holland. To date only those members who have volunteered for foreign service, have been sent out of the country, but great pressure is exercised to produce

volunteers. Little is known of the organization and strength of the Landstorm. In November 1943 it was estimated to have approximately four thousand men.

D. The Country Guard (Landwacht)

The Country Guard is a recent organization established by decree on 17 October 1943. Its function was at first the protection of National Socialists, but this was enlarged to such an extent that the Country Guard now amounts to an auxiliary police organization. It is under the joint supervision of the NSB, the WA, and the Germanic SS. Cornelis van Geelkerken, deputy-leader of the NSB, is Inspector-General of the Country Guard; J. A. Zondervan, commandant of the WA, and J. H. Feldmeyer, leader of the Germanic SS, are inspectors. Part of the organization is on permanent active duty, officers and men being housed in barracks, while the other part consists of a reserve of members who perform duty only during the time they spare from their ordinary civilian activities.

E. Organization Todt

The Organization Todt in the Netherlands is in the main a multi-national labor force conscripted from the German-occupied countries to build military installations for the Germans in Holland. One section of the organization is, however, a para-military unit -- the Protective Force (Schutzkorps -- SK).

XV. THE NSB AND THE LIBERATION OF HOLLAND

In spite of its elaborate organization, the Dutch National Socialist Movement does not rest on a stable base. An Allied decree dissolving the NSB would suffice to topple the whole structure if it has not already disappeared when the Allies arrive. The members of the NSB will at that time choose among three courses: some will join the German army or attempt to escape to Germany; some will go underground, organizing clandestine groups to work against the Allies; and some, remaining in Holland, will try to claim immunity from punishment, on the grounds that they never approved the principle or acts of the NSB and collaborated with it only because they were forced to do so. In the early days of the liberation members of the latter group may even turn against the Nazis and attempt to become known for their patriotism.

The present important leaders of the NSB and of the para-military organizations will probably take one of the first two courses outlined above. The rank and file of party members and sympathizers will take the third course. It is the disposition of this last group that will constitute a problem on the day of liberation. On the one hand there is the fact that the loyal Netherlanders feel toward the Dutch Nazis a hatred which surpasses that accorded to the Germans, for the Dutch Nazis are also traitors. When German resistance

in the Netherlands collapses and the force of this hatred is unleashed, all the necessary conditions for a wave of bloody vengeance will be present.

The Dutch abroad along with the British and Americans adopted the stand that traitors are to be punished only process of law, and even the underground Dutch press warned about the possibility that liberation of Holland will be the signal for indiscriminate bloodshed. None of the NSB members are armed except those belonging to the para-military formations. Those NSB members still in Holland at the time of Dutch liberation can be protected only if the Allies promptly round them up. The Dutch government in London and clandestine groups in the Netherlands have the necessary information concerning these men. It should be understood that such Allied intervention to preserve order may cause resentment and ill-will among the loyal population, and must therefore be approached with the greatest discretion.